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3. J. 2029

CHOZAR AND SELA;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

JAMES FLETCHER,

OF CLARE HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

Διζημαι δε τινι θνατων κεχαρισμενος ενθω
Συν Μουσαις· χαλεπαι γαρ ὁδοι τελεθουσιν αοιδᾶν
Μουσαων. THEOCRITUS.

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PREFACE.

To thrust a book into the hands of the public without a salutation is unmannerly; and to strive to be original rather in the mode of that salutation than in the book itself, is ridiculous. Wishing to avoid the imputation of both these qualities, I have taken up my pen to write a Preface, without any aim at originality, and shall make no apology if I lay it down, delivered merely of a little common place.

Many authors, on their first appearance at the bar of criticism, challenge the public, forgetting they are judges as well as jury: this is such a contempt of court as to merit the most severe sentence, passed on such offenders; and

an offence which the present author would wish to avoid.

Having premised thus much, I will now proceed to give some account of the Poems which compose the present volume.

The basis of truth on which the superstructure of fiction in the larger poem is founded, may be seen in Gibbon, and Ockley's History of the Saracens. Of the Minor Poems little need be said, and perhaps still less may be thought. Such trifles, though most dear to the author, as the records of his own feelings—the memorials of past joys and pains—must be almost void of interest to the general reader.

Such is the matter of the present volume. Whatever be its success, the object of the author cannot be entirely lost; for though on

enlisting himself among the "Poets militant below" (as Cowley terms them), he may be assailed by the animadversions of the fastidious, the frowns of the heartless, and the censure of the interested, they cannot deprive him of that pleasure "which only poets know."

The good opinion of those who may be inclined to think favourably of the present production, might be heightened, perhaps, if the work were premature: this, however is a plea the author cannot make; but if any of my readers will think the better of it for having been written before my eighteenth year, I will leave my cause in their charitable hands.

JAMES FLETCHER.

Clare Hall, Cambridge.

CHOZAR AND SELA;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS.

CANTO I.

CHOZAR AND SELA;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS.

MANY eventful years have flown
O'er sweet Damascus; and have thrown
The pall of ruin o'er the bowers,
Where Nature erst diffused around
The sweetest boon of scents and flowers,
She ever shed on earthly ground[1].
Howe'er its evening of delight
E'en now, perchance, may charm the sight,

Although its bright, meridian day
Of loveliness has passed away.
Behold it 'neath the evening sky,
That emulates the blushing dye
Of infant roses, which it holds
Cradled within its silken folds!
And now, beneath this gorgeous pall,
Behold the city's towering wall,
The splendid dome, the gilded fane,
Gay minions of a cloudless reign,
Which rear their burnished heads on high,
As glorying in their pageantry!
A cestus, spun of groves and flowers,
Is folded round these splendid towers.
Mark Barrady's quick water flow[2]
From Lebanon's aspiring brow:
The nursling of those craggy steeps,
From rock to rock it gaily leaps;
And leaves upon its rugged way
The traces of its boist'rous play.

But now it makes its peaceful bed
Beneath the cedar's gloomy head;
Now bursting from its resting place
Dashes again in headlong race!
See! now it holds its silent course,
Divested of its reckless force;
And lingers on its winding way
With gentle flowers, that round it play
As loves, who bind in silken chains
The invader of their native plains.
And now it glides beneath the shade
Of many a zephyr-woven braid
Of citron boughs, that pendant rest
Their burdens on its pearly breast.
Now nestling mid the grateful roses,
As palled with sweets, in peace reposes.
And when amid the fruits and flowers
Of all these lovely groves and bowers,
In silence it has poured its dews,
And vivified their fading hues,

It takes its lingering, last farewell
For ever of its favourite dell;
But often its reluctant wave
Meandering turns in backward course,
As fleeing from the rushy grave,
That pillows soon its languid force.
For now the enfeebled current steals
Slow, murmurless, unto its rest:
With freshened green the turf reveals
The tenant of its silent breast[3].
Such was this lovely city—crowned
With all the sweets of earthly ground—
The last asylum where Delight
Might linger, ere she took her flight
From earth—an Eden of repose,
Where Grief might soon forget her woes;
And Innocence might safely dwell
As pearls within their casket-shell.
And here it seemed, by Heaven blest,
Each gentle floweret of the breast

Securely might put forth its leaves,
Nor fear the ambushed wintry blast,
That in earth's faithless climate reaves
Their sweets, though winter's storms seemed past.
For well might those, who have not known
That Fortune's smile begets her frown,
Suppose that peace had traced around
This spot of paradisal ground
Her magic circle, to exclude
All War's blood-thirsty vampire brood
From this abode of bliss and love,
Sweet pilgrims from the realms above.
But though still pleasure long may reign,
At length the clouds of woe will burst;
And man must meet his doom of pain
E'en by that respite doubly curst.
Though long the lovely, tender flower
May bloom unhurt by blight or shower.

The time must come, when sure decay
Shall snatch its lingering charms away.
And long this beauteous city stood,
A peaceful island, in the flood
Of ravenous war, which howled around
This lovely spot of chosen ground;
But ah! at length the time was come:
Damascus bent beneath her doom!
From wide Arabia's scorching sands,
Greedy for gore, the Moslem bands,
Abaddon's locust host of war[4],
Rushed, casting desolation far
O'er Syria's rosy plains, which long
Had echoed but with woodland song.
Damascus saw around her fall
The towns that fringed her flowery plain;
And long she towered above them all,
A goddess mid her Dryad train.
But even she must pass away—
The last beam of a fading day!

The sun was waning from the sight,
And o'er the flower-girt city shed
His parting smile of rosy light,
Before his cheering lustre fled.
How sweetly does that evening beam
Wake in the breast the sumbering sigh,
And all the joys of childhood's dream,
Those blissful phantoms long gone by!
The well known grove, the happy bower,
Where once we spent this evening hour,
And all the joys that youth can feel,
Before our backward vision steal.
But this declining sun, which cast
Its parting ray o'er Syria's towers,
Told not, as when it parted last,
Of childhood's joys, or happier hours:
It did not call on man to hear
The bulbul's softened evening lay,
Or watch sweet Hesperus appear
With pensive, unobtrusive, ray:

It bent the Moslem host to prayer,
Obedient to the Muezzin's call,
Which stole along the slumbering air
Around the city's guarded wall.
It dies: the scene again is still,
Save whispering sounds that faintly thrill
Along the camp, as ofttimes creep
Low murmurs o'er the ocean-deep,
Though in their rocky, storm-worn, nest
The wearied waves have sunk to rest,
It seems that Silence now has spread,
Amidst these bowers, her peaceful bed,
Or that decay has quelled the strife
Of every pulse and throb of life;
But on the sleeping bough there glows
A living smile, a verdant bloom,
Which tell that health and life repose
Amid this stillness of the tomb.
And now the starry host on high
Leave the blue caverns of the sky,

To which the raging lord of day
Had chased their trembling bands away.
Some as the twinkling diamond gleam;
Some glisten with a pearly beam;
And Luna, daughter of the night,
Sprinkles the earth with dewy light.
And who are yonder, gentle pair,
Who in still converse linger there?
Sweet Phœbe whispers from above,
"It is the tender hour of love;"
But love is for the peaceful bower,
Where bloom the sweets of fruit and flower,
Not for the guarded battlement,
Where hostile blood may soon be blent.
There is, howe'er, a love, whose power
Can brook the blast of sorrow's hour,
More firm, perhaps, (if it can be,)
In pitiless adversity,
Than even in the stormless reign
Of Joy, without a single pain.

The key-stone, if not founded sure,
When tempests rage, cannot endure
Its burden; but a quick decay
Must tear the impending pile away.
But if well founded on its base,
No storms can wrest it from its place;
The firmer will it still remain
Although the blasts of winter strain,
The more the weight it has above:
'Tis thus with true and constant love.
And such was that, which closer bound
Their hearts now war was sleeping round.
From a proud race of noble name,
Long known in Syria's rolls of fame,
On which no deed had ever flung
The blot of shame was Chozar sprung,
Who now was lingering by the side
Of Sela, his betrothed bride.
From childhood's hours their hearts were wove
Fast in the tender bands of love;

They framed in concert little wiles,
They shared almost their infant smiles,
As two coeval buds, which sip
The selfsame kiss from Zephyr's lip[5].
Beneath the selfsame evening shade
They bent their knees in simple prayer,
And the same evening breath conveyed
The gentle sounds to Heaven's ear.
In manhood's least o'erclouded day,
Illumed by Fortune's brightest ray,
Full many a dark memorial stains
Life's checkered roll of joys and pains;
But every dawn of daylight brought
Young hours with Pleasure's nectar fraught,
To steep in mirthful redolence
These opening buds of innocence.
What balmy tones of softness creep
O'er the worn heart, and wake from sleep
Each stagnant feeling, when the smile
Of infant lips, and childhood's wile,

That germ of manhood's cunning, raise
The spirit of our happier days!
Their life was a perennial stream
Of evanescent, blooming joys;
Like eastern palms, which ever teem
With new-born fruitage, that destroys
With fresh exuberance, the store,
That decked the lavish boughs before[6].
The smile upon their lips impressed,
Would sojourn there, a lingering guest,
As if it were its native nest.
Their heart-strings all their tension lent
To every thrill affection sent,
As tender branches, that delay
Each gale upon its peaceful way.
At length a new-born impulse stole
All feeling of their ravished soul,
A tone of sweetness, which devoured
Each other note of pleasing sound—
A vortex of delight which poured
Its tide, absorbing all around.

The sense, like melody's infusion,
Into their spirits' temple crept,
As fearful lest its sweet intrusion
Might wake the inmates as they slept.
As imperceptibly it spread
As mists, which from their marshy bed
Arise, when Phœbe's mellow ray
Sips the last breath of dying day;
And softly in their tenuous arms
Inwreathe pure Terra's slumbering charms.
So silently Love gains the nest
Where infant pleasures are at rest,
That in his artful guise, he seems
A phantasy of friendship's dreams[7].
How greedily the heart-strings drink
The mutual tale affection breathes,
As travellers on the streamlet's brink
Imbibe the welcome wave, that wreathes
Its liquid ringlets with the flowers,
Which deck the desert's sand-girt bowers!

How rapturously our bosoms hail
The first, faint tone of Passion's tale,
That timid breath, that wafts along
The freight of love we pined for long;
The harbinger of what we ne'er
Could hope another breast might share;
That voice which tells us what we thought
Might be a pleasure fancy-wrought—
The creature of a rapturous dream,
That melts before day's wakening beam,
Is sweet reality, so sure
Its calm devotion shall endure
Unhurt, unfading, when Decay
Has swept the proudest strength away!
We hail the welcome, whispered feeling,
Timidly o'er our senses stealing,
As when the' harmonious bird of night
First revels in the full delight
Of melody, till life is drowned—
Extinguished in voluptuous sound.

Or as when first it feels the thrill
Of Echo's sympathy distil,
Responding tenderly the tone,
It deemed exclusively its own[8].
When lovely lips that secret tell,
Oh! how our breasts with transport swell,
To know at length that we are things
To which some kindred being clings,
Whereas before the insidious fear
Would often wring the secret tear,
When whispering, that the cheeks which threw
O'er our cold hearts affection's dew,
Would smile as gladly when the tomb
Enwrapt us in its senseless gloom;
That from life's pleasures we might steal,
And not one heart our absence feel,
Unheeded as the idle stone,
Amidst the ocean's desert thrown,
And unlamented as the wave,
When sinking in its trackless grave!

But then we know there is a breast,
On which our aching heads may rest;
A bosom that would gladly share
Each hidden pang that rankles there;
One, that when in her silent cell
The fairy hands of Memory tell
Her rosary of smiles and tears,
That register of hopes and fears,
Shall steal the grief-worn chain, and bring
For future days a brighter string!
Such feelings bloom in eve.y clime
Unhurt by all the change of time;
Rebellion's ravenous jaws devour
The Apis of despotic power,
That ox to which the servile knee
Succumbs with blind idolatry,
That cursed beast, whose pampered fangs
Are nourished by a nation's pangs;
Derision tramples on the shrine
Which yesterday was deemed divine;

And Reason's keen, electric, stroke
Splinters to dust the gnarled oak
Of Superstition's deadly soil,
The foster-plant of ages past,
Which, held by many a fibre-coil,
Long laughed to scorn Opinion's blast;
But Love's sweet amaranthine flower
Defies Destruction's deadliest power!
And where could Love more rightly bless
The heart with Purity's caress,
Than where the gentle Syrian gale,
In dulcet murmurs, lisps its tale
Of amorous softness to each leaf,
As comfort bearing balm to grief?
And where could closest inquest find
Two hearts more faithfully combined,
Than those, whose pure and storm-proof nests
Were Sel[illegible]nd her lover's breasts?
They seemed but portions of one whole—
Two mansions of the selfsame soul —

Two twin-born woodbines closely braiding
Their kindred arms, and sweetly aiding
Each other's frailty 'gainst the power
Of hostile wind and ruthless shower.
In Sela Heaven had combined
The loveliest form and purest mind;
She was a spiritual essence, blent
With Beauty's breathing blandishment,
A heavenly exhalation, fraught
With feeling and impassioned thought;
A spot of verdure 'mid the dearth
Which Sin has spread o'er things of earth
She seemed to pure Affection's eye,
An envoy-spirit from the sky,
Conducting home each wandering will—
A living exorcism of ill!
But hidden feeling pure and high
Oppressed her Spirit's buoyancy;
Through Syria's rosy vales she stole
Like music o'er the pensive soul,

With airy, undulating, motion,
Like curlews o'er the sleeping ocean.
And now when Phœbe's pearly sheen
Enamels all the lovely scene,
And star-beams gently filter through
Eve's silken canopy of blue;
Still lingering on a lonely tower,
The lovers spend this silent hour.
Before their eyes, in mute array,
The sleeping host of Moslems lay,
As peaceful then and meekly mild
In slumber, as the infant child.
And on this silent horde of war
Pale Phœbe and each watchful star
Their gentle beams as softly shed,
As on the rose's weary head.
Alas! that Heaven should e'er allow
Day to intrude on such a night;
That hearts so mild and peaceful now
Should ever wake for cruel fight!

Before the Eastern gates which gleam
The first with day's returning beam,
Proud Caled's haughty warriors lay[9]
In silent, but in stern array.
This chieftain held the first command
Of all the warring Moslem band;
And many a dread and bloody deed
Had proved him worthy of his creed.
The Moslem troops who fought beneath
His flag, had played the game of death
On Irak's plains; and filled its dells
With murderous shouts, and dying yells.
Abu[10] was next in rank and fame,
Nor had such murder stained his name;
Islam his faith, but in his mien
A Christian soul was clearly seen.
His station was the violet vale[11],
So famous in the amorous tale
Of Syrian maids and youths, whose loves
Were often whispered in its groves.

His partners in the deeds of war
Had sought his banner from afar,
From Shihir[12], where the myrrh distils,
From Saba's vales, and Najed's hills,
From Ghassan, and the fruitful dells
Of Yaman, where the bulbul dwells.
These hosts had not forgot the chain
And dungeon of the Ethiop's reign,
When Christians knelt in Moloch's fane[13].
And now their passions burned for food;
They longed to slake the thirsty tooth
Of savage vengeance in the blood
Of silvered age and dimpled youth.
This, this is faith, when cruel ire
And malice light the altar-fire!
The sternest of the Christians fled
Before this band, with panic dread;
For, armed with vengeance, nought could stay
These warriors on their death-paved way.
Thus on they strode through Christian blood,
Resistless as Al Arem's flood[14].

And Hira's vales and Oman's coasts[15]
Poured forth their miscellaneous hosts,
To combat in the hateful cause
Of Mahomet and Islam's laws.
This horde, o'ercanopied by night,
Was slumb'ring in the lovers' sight.
Chozar, whose searching eye could trace
In Sela's pale, but lovely, face
Awaking dread, more closely pressed
The weeping beauty to his breast,
And thus the trembling fair addressed:
" Sela, thou know'st I must away:
Before to-morrow's dawning ray
Shall bleach the stars, and wake the flowers,
Must I be far from these proud towers.
But shall we faint with nerveless grief,
Because an absence, safe and brief,
Dissevers us, who never bore
A trial such as this before?
No, Sela, no; the God who blest
My life with thee"—he paused—he pressed

The weeping beauty to his heart—
" Can never wrench those ties apart!
What though a few brief hours may roll
In desolation o'er my soul?
They cannot steal the blissful treasure
Of Memory's rustless, hoarded pleasure;
They cannot, no! they cannot bound
Hope's vision by their desolate round.
Oh! wide indeed the waste must lie,
That shrouds from Hope's long sighted eye
The sweeter, happier domain,
That smiles beyond our road of pain!
What though this night thy lips must tell
Thy heart's sad, lingering wish, 'Farewell?'
Shall not their tones be doubly sweet
When next within these walls we meet?
What though the Moslem host now cast
Destruction—as the wintry blast
Scattering the foliage of the wood—
O'er all our land; and human blood,

The blood of youth and age, imbrue
What erst drank nought but Heaven's dew?
What though the hostile fire now pour
Its burning famine, where before
Plenty and peace and happiness
Seemed revelling in one sweet caress?
Shall not this lenient God, whose throne
Is based on love, on love alone,
Arrest the host, whose cruel food
Is human gore, whose drink is blood,
Who murder silvered age, and wrest
The infant from its mother's breast,
When e'en the savage blast, whose blow
Lays the proud mountain cedar low,
Scarce ruffles e'en the tenderest wreath
Of the young sapling's leaves beneath[16]?
Soon, soon, shall tender bosomed calm
Pour in our wounds its soothing balm;
Yes, soon yon battle-burdened plain
Shall smile in peace and love again!"

" Adieu! ye hours," the maiden said,
" When, blest with peace, we careless strayed
Within the wood, and in the vale,
And listened to the bulbul's tale,
Which whispered from the gloomy grove
The secret pangs of widowed love.
Oh! little did I augur then,
Lone minstrel of the violet glen,
That thy harmonious love-lorn moan
Was soon, alas! to be my own.
And if I ever shed a tear
In pity for thy soothless woe,
It was not wrested by the fear,
That I perchance was soon to know
The cureless and untented* smart,
That rankles in the love-lorn heart.
It was not that my bosom, scarred,
Felt its keen anguish o'er again;
It was not that remembrance marred
My present joy with former pain.

* ' The untented woundings of a father's curse.'—LEAR.

It was because so well I knew
The balm of sweet Affection's dew,
And guessed how lone and sorrow-dried
Are hearts to which it is denied.
I never thought that thou might'st be
The type of love, the type of me!
War, horrid war! to thee we owe
The infliction of our present woe:
Peace could the worst of torments quell;
But thou would'st make e'en heaven a hell!"
" Deluded wretches," Chozar cries,
" Who feast on others' agonies!
Deluded fools, who think to gain
Enjoyment from another's pain!
Ye slaves of warfare, do ye aim
To wear the fadeless wreath of fame?
Why weave it of the poison-tree,
Whose pests exude eternally?
The praise of lips, the curse of hearts,
Is all the fame that war imparts

Fools only crown the warrior's brow;
Fools only wear what fools bestow.
Is it revenge, whose palm abhorred
With glory wreathes the warrior's sword?
Tigers are then more brave than you;
They kill their prey and eat it too!
Ye savage wretches, I could bear
This pain, if there were none to share
The torturing rack of grief with me;
Nor execrate your cruelty!
But Sela too!"—he pauses now,
And wipes the tear-drops from his brow,
Stifling the groan and heavy sigh,
Betraying inward agony—
" Oh! soon may he who rules above
Forestal the eternal reign of love,
That all the cruel wounds of war
May soon be healed, and felt no more!
But now, farewell! or I shall stay
Till Morn has heralded the day!"

" Chozar, adieu!" the maiden cries,
With faltering voice and tearful eyes;
" May he who shielded with his power
Poor Teckla in the trying hour[17],
Watch o'er thy steps, and shelter thee,
And bring thee back to love and me!"
" He will! he will!" the youth replies
With that wild gaiety, that dries
The luscious tear, but wrings the heart
With secret, and concentred, smart;
" Not yet shall haughty Moslem eyes
Glisten at Chozar's obsequies!
And do not fear; for they who spare
The blossoms of the fragile rose[18],
Oh! surely cannot, will not, dare
Molest the sweeter rose that blows
Upon thy cheek, though canker-woe
Has blanched the lovely blossom now!"
How oft the joyous words which fall
As gaily as the madrigal,

The skylark carols from on high
With early, new-strung, melody,
Are uttered only to conceal
The secret pang our bosoms feel,
But which our love or tender pride
Impels us from the world to hide!
Though Chozar's accents seemed to spring
Fresh from his bosom, wantoning
On Hope's light pinion, dark Despair
Had made that throbbing breast his lair.
But long sweet Hope will linger round
The heart, although despair has frowned.
The moaning bird with heaving breast
Long hovers o'er her pillaged nest;
With circling pinion lingers round
The leafy, violated, ground;
Pines o'er each chilling, mossy, braid
Now strewed beneath the faithless shade;
Still listens for the nestlings' tone,
Although the tender brood is gone.

Thus round the heart sweet Hope will play,
Though frightened by Despair away.
The mountain's summits brightly gleam,
Basking beneath the evening beam,
Although Night, with her poppy wreath,
Is pillowed on the vale beneath;
Thus oft our words will warmly flow,
Although our hearts are cold below.
And such was Chozar's; such the smile
Of Hope, that lingered yet awhile,
Faintly convulsive, like the strife
That harbingers the flight of life,
Ere Death, with keen, unsparing rage,
Obliterates the living page
Of Memory, and his gorgon-beam
Disperses Hope's prophetic dream,
And leaves the heart without redress,
All cold, all mute, all tenantless!

The youth's dark eye turned from the plain
Towards the maid, as if the pain,

Which the mute horde of war awoke
Within his mind, that deeply spoke
In low, prophetic, thrilling tone
Its baleful warning, like the moan
That issues from the cloud's dark cell,
Pealing its deep-voiced tempest-bell[19],
Could quaff Nepenthe from that cheek
So beautiful, so warmly meek
That cheek was lovely still, but pale
As if 'twere blanched by Horror's tale,
For grief had stolen the trembling tinge
Of bloom which once disported there,
Just like the vestal flowers that fringe
A woody spring, and scarcely dare
As some secluded, lovely maid,
Slow stealing from the harem's shade,
Timid, and bashful, to display
Their beauty to the eye of day.
That lovely cheek was bleached by woe,
Pale as the rose of Jericho[20].

And that soft eye of heaven's own blue,
Like Vesper's chalice filled with dew,
O'ercharged and swollen, could not restrain
The current of its balmy rain.
If Chozar's soul before that eye
Then bent in sweet idolatry,
When Justice stern the sin records,
Let Mercy weep away the words;
For none could mark thy eye's soft ray,
And turn still cold, unmoved, away;
Oh! none could see it glistening through
Its liquid veil of balmy dew,
Nor own affection's soft control
The Keblah of the amorous soul.
Thus Chozar pondered o'er the charms
Upon his throbbing breast reclined,
In present safety from the harms
Their soft timidity divined.
At other times he would have tried
To sooth his Sela's keen distress,

And make her throbbing pulse subside
With love's balsamic tenderness;
But now he could not kiss away
The truant tear, that seemed to say,
With Sorrow's tongue, " my true love, see
How warmlier, more devotedly,
I love, than e'en the close caress
Of tenderest hours could e'er express!"
He could not speak, though many a thought
With Memory's precious burden fraught
Flashed o'er his mind, eager to find
A harbour in his fair one's mind;
The tongue is bound as by a spell,
When the full heart has most to tell.
Then Sela gazed upon the bowers,
Her sweet resort in kindlier hours,
While many a dear remembrance stole
In silence o'er her saddened soul.
" Beneath yon palm how oft we heard
The music of the evening bird!

How oft within yon citron grove
I listened to the tale of love!
How oft our lingering feet have strayed
Beneath yon gloomy cypress shade!
How oft *he* climbed yon orange tree
To rob its yellow fruit for me!
Beneath yon tamarisk which spreads
Its sullen boughs o'er violet beds,
How oft, regardless of night-dews,
We listened to the Grecian muse!
'Twas in yon dear, dear, jessamine bower,
When some unkindness wrung my breast,
He wooed me with its silver flower,
And lulled my sorrow into rest."
While thus she thought, a lambent smile
Played o'er her pallid cheek awhile,
But ah! as faint and coldly mild,
As pain by melody beguiled;
As mournful as the ghastly light
That beams upon a grove by night,

Whose very radiance is so chill,
It wakes a fearful, frigid, thrill.
Just then amidst a flowery dell
Whose oft-trod paths she loved so well,
The sable eagle caught her eye,
Blotting the pure and azure sky;
'Twas Caled's banner, his whose hate
Of Christian men was stern as fate,
Whose sword had drained from many a breast
Its sanguine tide, whose arm might wrest
Each web of joy that Hope had wove
Through many a year of youthful love.
" This very eve! good God!" she cried,
She could no more; the strangling tide
Of rising sighs repressed the flow
Of all the kindred words of woe.
Once more with phrensy Chozar pressed
His Sela to his throbbing breast;

" Oh! think," he cried, " of love and me
Whate'er my future lot may be!
Adieu, my Sela!" he is gone;
And love-lorn Sela weeps alone.

END OF CANTO I.

NOTES

TO

THE FIRST CANTO.

[1] DAMASCUS was proverbial for beauty; it was styled by Julian, the Apostate, "the eye of all the east, the sacred and most magnificent Damascus."—*Vide* Julian's Epistles. The Mahometans imagine that there are four earthly Paradises:—the Gouta or Green Garden of Damascus; the Shibo Bawan, a most beautiful district of Persia; the Nahar Obulla, a tract, or rather island, near the confluence of the Obulla and the Tigris; and the Soghel of Sarmacand; among which it is seen Damascus holds the first place. Mahomet's exclamation concerning this city is too well known to need present insertion.

2 "Mark Barrady's quick water flow."

The river Barrady, or Baraddy (as it is sometimes spelt), is the Chrysorrhoas, or Golden Stream of the

Greeks. It rises in Mount Lebanon, or Hermon, at the distance of a few miles from the city of Damascus.

[3] The river is lost in a marsh at a few miles' distance from the city.

[4] "Abaddon's locust-host of war."

Vide Revelations, ix. 11.

[5] These lines may recal to the mind of the classical reader the exquisite expression of Martial, "Amicitia prætexta."

[6] In the palm one crop of fruit is thrust off by another.

[7] "A phantasy of Friendship's dreams."

We have in Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard"

"When Love approached me under Friendship's name."

[8] The effect music has on the nightingale is well known. In the warmer climates the nightingale loses its claim to that appellation.

9 " Proud Caled's haughty warriors lay."

Caled was of the tribe Koreish, and embraced Islam in the eighth year of the Hegira. He was noted for his cruelty to the Christians, and thence acquired the name ἡ μαχαιρα του θεϐ, the ' Sword of God.'

10 Abu Obeidah was of the Koreish, and though a firm Mahometan, not so cruel to the Christians as his colleagues.

11 " His station was the violet vale."

This was a beautiful valley to the west of Damascus.

12 Shihir, the land of frankincense; Saba, or Hadramut, and Yaman, provinces of Yaman, one of the four ancient kingdoms of Arabia. The Homerites of Arabia Felix obtained possession of almost the whole of this kingdom. They were remarkable for their ferocity.

13 " These hosts had not forgot the chain
And dungeon of the Ethiop's reign,
When Christians knelt in Moloch's fane."

Yesef, a Jewish King of Yaman, who reigned about seventy years before Mahomet, persecuted the Chris-

tians with extreme virulence. Above three hundred and forty were burned in the city of Najràn alone. He was dethroned by the King of Ethiopia. By these means the Ethiopian Christians became masters of Yaman, and they, in their turn, became the persecutors.

14 " Resistless as Al Arem's flood."

This accidental but destructive inundation happened in the reign of Abel Shems, the fourth King of Yaman, and became quite proverbial for any thing destructive.

15 The kingdom of Hira was subdued by Caled. Oman, the country about the Persian gulf.

16 This description of Mahometan enormities is exaggerated, for Abubekir ordered the Mahometans to kill no women and children, to burn no corn fields, palm trees, &c.—*Vide* Ockley's History.

17 " Poor Teckla in the trying hour."

Teckla was the first virgin martyr at Loikia, or Laodicea.

18 " The blossoms of the fragile rose."

The Saracens, as well as the Turks, had a reverence for the rose. Nec Turcæ rosarum folia humi jacere patiuntur: quod ut veteres rosam ex sanguine Veneris sic isti ex sudore Mahumetis natam sibi persuaserunt."—Epist. I. a Augerii Gislenii Busbequii, p. 51. Elzevir Ed.

19 " Pealing its deep-voiced tempest-bell."

In many districts of the continent, subject to periodical inundation, the approach of the destructive element is announced by the pealing of a bell, called the storm-bell.

20 " Pale as the rose of Jericho."

The rose of Jericho is perfectly white. The bush on which it grows has many peculiarities.

21 " The Keblah of the amorous soul."

The Keblah is the point of the heavens toward which the Mahometans turn when they pray.

22 Caled's standard at this time was a black eagle.

CHOZAR AND SELA;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS.

CANTO II.

CHOZAR AND SELA;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF DAMASCUS.

Oh! is there in the world a breast
Within itself supremely blest,
That does not, from its desert, pant
To slake a burning, feverish, want
In Friendship's water brooks? When Grief
And all her blood-hound pangs are nigh,
And all the vile herd from us fly,
Where can we look to for relief,
But where Affection's open arms
Will shield us from the dire alarms?

Oh! when we faint amidst the strife
That loads the battle field of life,
When not the brightest, richest, gem
That glows in Pleasure's diadem,
Can purchase short relief, or bring
A minute's balm, or lend the wing
That bears the ring-dove to her nest,
To flee away and be at rest;
Oh! where can Misery find repose,
A Cordial for her racking woes?
But only where Affection spreads
Her mantle o'er our storm-worn heads,
And chafes our frozen hearts, and pours
Her oil and wine into our sores.
Oh! yes, Affection can infuse
O'er parched hearts her balsam dews,
Can lure them to their former joys,
As children to their cast-off toys;
Can nerve our strength, that from the couch
Of love, on which our spirits crouch,

With new-born force we rise again
To struggle with a world of pain!
But while the savage tiger finds
A shelter from the cruel winds,
And has a home within his lair,
As sweet as has the trembling hare.
When all the souls he loved are fled,
Man has not where to lay his head[1];
The staff is broke, he leant upon;
His guides, and comforters, are gone:
He tracks life's painful waste alone.
And then how can he bear the load
Of grief upon that rugged road,
On which before his wearied heart
Had often fainted, though some dear
And fellow pilgrims had been near
To ease the weight, and bear a part?
Although his widowed soul delay
To shuffle off its shroud of clay,
The flame of life that gleams awhile,
As casting a forgiving smile

Upon the world, that gulf of care,
For all the ills it suffered there,
Is like the glow that lingers yet,
Although the glorious sun is set;
Like faint, surviving tones that cling
With fond embrace, around the string,
That bare them, though the minstrel's hand
Exerts no more its sweet command.
And such must be thy wretched days,
Poor Sela, while life's bark delays
To set its tattered sail, and flee
From this inhospitable sea,
To that blest port, where it will find
No ravenous surge, no cruel wind.
For Chozar, who explored before
The coves upon life's rocky shore,
She knew could do the same no more.
When, on his mission sent, he bade
With quivering lip, his love 'farewell,'
She feared, but sweet Hope round her played,
And whispered all might yet be well.

How oft Hope, olive-crowned, weaves
From Fear's portentous sibyl-leaves
Propitious lots, and, bent to cheat
Grief of his victims, fills our ear
With Pleasure's notes as not to hear
The tread of Grief's approaching feet!
But the sure stroke, though long delayed,
Alas! is but severer made;
For while we sport at ease, stern woe
Is gathering force to give the blow.

Poor lonely Sela wore away
With hope and fear the livelong day;
O'er all the pastimes she had loved,
Music or song, her spirit roved,
As insects 'neath the mid-day sun
Sip from all flowers, but light on none.
But now she fancies she descries—
Now hopes 'tis only fear's surmise—
That novel whisperings creep along
The gathering crowds from tongue to tongue;

That strange constraint now seems to bind
The freedom of each friendly mind;
That those most prompt to bear relief
But yesterday to soothe her grief,
Now meet her silently, nor bring
A single drop from Pity's spring;
But cast on her sad looks, that tell
More than the solace that e'er fell
From the wet eye, or Pity wrung
In tenderest accents from the tongue.
It is too true; 'tis vain to try
To hide it from Love's eagle-eye[2];
Vain Hope evaporates in air,
And fear is heightened to despair,
The tidings come—that fatal blow—
"Chozar is captured by the foe!"

She groans, she falls, but sheds no tears;
And scarce the taint of pain appears
To soil her pallid cheek; woe's wound
When deepest, deadliest, is found

With gash so faint, the worldly eye
Might pass it unregarded by.
A blow when heaviest, steeps the sense
Awhile in lifeless somnolence,
But horrid is the fearful waking
To hearts, not broke, but slowly breaking!
Oh! that is not the painful hour
When for a time life takes its flight,
And spurns the band of Sorrow's power,
And laughs to scorn Pain's tyrant might;
Ah no; 'tis when it feels again
The deadly curb of Sorrow's chain;
Ah no; 'tis when it writhes again
Within its prison-house of pain!
Oh! none can tell what tortures pressed
Their burdens on thy waking breast,
Poor Sela! as thy feeble sense
Crawled slowly from its impotence,
Asking for what the tear-swollen eye;
And whence the heart-strings' agony?

And from its trance thy grief awoke,
And long-eclipsed remembrance broke
Through the dark mists impregned with pain,
That hung around thy aching brain!
From such a spring of grief there fall
No balmy drops; the few that crawl
From the red eye, cannot assuage
The fever of Pain's blighting rage;
But only scald, as does the dew
That trickles from the mist of blue,
Envenoming the azure sky
Of Syria, or of Araby.
At first she struggled with the chain
That bound her to this rack of pain,
Like the poor wretch, who, drowning, gasps
Wrestling with Death, and vainly grasps
The faithless waves, that still elude
His hold, like pleasure's winged brood,
Till, stunning him with death's alarms,
They fold him in their stifling arms.

She now loathed what she loved before,
Those erst her friends seem so no more,
For all is cruelty and pain
Unto her wild distempered brain.
Oh! let not him who ne'er has known
What terror broods in Fortune's frown,
Severely censure the complaint
Of those who on life's journey faint,
And 'mid this world's dark storms despond,
As those who have no hope beyond;
Oh! let him think how hard in sooth
Is wretched sorrow's painful bed,
When tender hope no more can smooth
The pillow 'neath her aching head.
How doubly stern is Fortune's frown
To those who've known her smiles alone;
How doubly dissonant and dire
Are Sorrow's war-whoops tongued with fire,
To ears that have been pampered long
With peaceful pleasure's siren-song.

At length she sunk beneath the stroke,
And her mind bent to sorrow's yoke,
Waiting till Death should o'er her creep
With step as soft as that of sleep,
And oft her mind a respite sought,
When harassed with the load of thought,
And drawing many a heavy sigh
From the deep well of agony,
Amidst the silent joys that bless
The unpeopled vale of lifelessness;
And left the bustling world of woes
To seek the hamlet of repose,
Where memory's visions round us play,
Like the bright glow, which sunny day
Leaves on the mountain-tops to tell
The pining flowerets in the dell,
It will return; and often too
These visions have as bright a hue
As memory in her wakened power,
Without the pain of reason's hour.

And oft her spirit would retrace
Life's beaten track with stealthy pace,
Flying with languor and dismay
The hostile woes that lined its way.
Ah! happy had it ne'er again
Resumed its pilgrimage of pain!
Oh! unalloyed indeed would be
The ore of man's felicity;
If when we faint amidst the strife
With which we climb the hill of life,
When the dim heights beyond appear
All gloomy to the eye of Fear,
Our wearied minds might always flee
Adown the paths of memory;
And sport again amid the sweets
Which ever deck life's mountain-base,
Where first the human spirit greets
The struggle of its upland race!
Nor feel that Reason's sharpened goad
Still drives us on her rugged road,

But grief will wake, the voice of pain
Will call the truant back again.
This Sela felt; the cruel ray
Of sorrow's morning chased away
Unsparingly the balmy dews,
With which sweet memory imbues
The heart, when o'er it she does cast
The moonlight radiance of the past.
There are some breasts which can rely
Upon the mail of apathy,
And mock the sinewy arm of Woe,
E'en when she deals her heaviest blow.
But such as mock at Woe's alarms,
    Were born beneath her wintry sky;
Were cradled in her icy arms,
    And rocked by stern Adversity.
But Sela was a summer flower,
The suckling of spring's latest shower,
That has not winter for its nurse,
Whose lullaby is Boreas' curse,

But whose sweet gently-dawning charms
Were fondled in soft Zephyr's arms,
And cherished by the sweetest ray
That ever blest a summer day:
Her spotless weft of life was wove
With tenderness and gentle love,
The purest joys that e'er had birth
In the bleak clime of fallen earth,
Sprung from the seeds which Mercy's hand
Stole from the paradisal land,
To cherish e'en in earthly bowers
The exotic bloom of Eden's flowers.
But ah! misfortune's knife destroys
The tissue of these blissful joys,
And life's dark web must now be wove
Without the brightening woof of love.
Oh! soon the hand of fate must break
This wasting thread so dark and weak.
And in her pain poor Sela wrought
New tortures from her gloomy thought;

For Sorrow, with her scorpion-dart
Adds to her own consuming smart[3].
The mind will mete its weight of grief
Although it hopes for no relief
To ease the burden, but the grave,
Which saves when nothing else can save.
The wildered mind so long surveys
The harpy woe that on it preys,
That oft it hopes its dizzy pain
Is but a spasm of the brain,
A spectral pang its terrors weave
From the dark mists of reason's eve.
But as stern Death more widely spread
His frost through Sela's tender frame,
The vulture of her anguish fled,
And dove-eyed resignation came.
She did not murmur or complain,
But only seemed on earth to wait,
A pilgrim, patiently to drain
The last drop of her bowl of fate;

And till Heaven's messenger should come
To call her gentle spirit home.
And e'en before, her saint-like mind
Was unto Heaven almost resigned;
All earth-born happiness and joys
Earth's follies and its splendid toys,
Were dust on which her spirit trod
Its pilgrimage to Heaven and God.
And only one temptation stole
Her wishes from their heavenly goal,
And wooed them from the things above
To sink to earth, and that was love;
This passion was the only tie
That linked her to mortality.
But now this tender link is riven,
Earth no more shares her soul with heaven.
Oh! mark her glazing, azure, eye,
As pale as summer's mid-day sky,
Those beauteous lips like faded roses
In which the canker-worm reposes.

That brow which e'en already seems
To bear the angel's claiming sign[4],
And see! her holy spirit gleams
As bursting through its fragile shrine.
Ah! sure her race is nearly run;
And soon her soul must burst the shroud
Of earthliness, as when the sun
Rends into shreds his amice-cloud.
Yet a few days, and life must close
Its gates on her and all her woes.

'Tis night; and silence holds her sway
O'er the mute wrecks of conquered day,
All desolation! grand, alone,
The star-gemmed heaven her crown, her throne
The slumbering world, her cold hands choke
The voice of melody that spoke
By day, in many a descant wove
With notes of mirth and joy and love.
Save now and then low murmurs creep,
As shadows o'er the mind of sleep,

The restless shades that haunt the gloom
Which night has made sweet daylight's tomb.
Now as the sentry slowly stalks
Along his castellated walks,
Hope migrates from the barren strand
Of this existence to the land
Of dim futurity, till fear
Wakes him, and all again is drear.
And as his mind reviews the site
    Of life's dark ruins erst so gay,
The dreary solitude of night
    Startles his soul, snatching away
The pleasing thoughts, and fills his ear
With many a painful note of fear.
And oft his reason strives to wrest
This terror from his throbbing breast,
But e'en his manliest thoughts are blent
With many a dread presentiment.
Until at length his harassed mind,
Racked with its weakness, strives to find

A refuge from its mute dismay
In thoughtlessness so falsely gay.
And mountainous clouds now sail along,
And round the moon's sweet crescent throng,
Muffling the orbs of heaven's cope,
As drifting sorrows stifling hope.
But all is still; no gusts inflate
The dark sails of the laden sky;
The winds, as wearied with their freight,
Lay down their misty load, and die.
But hark! the gates are burst—swords clash–
The city trembles with the crash!
" On! on! no quarter!" rings around,
And bloody swords obey the sound.
" For Heaven and Mahomet we fight,
And Issa's brood shall rue this night.
Seize, seize the Christian infidel,
And wrap him in the shroud of hell!
On! on! the slumbering sentries' sleep
Is broke by death; so let all creep

To hell's fierce furnace; plunge in fire
The sleeping town; let dome and spire
Rush, wreathed with crackling flames upon
The herd of Allah's upstart son!"
So shout the Moslems; and the stroke
Of sabres plants the icy yoke
Of death on many a slumbering neck,
Whose innocence no Moslems reck,
And many deeds of murder then,
As dread as ever met the ken
Of Heaven's blue tearless eye were seen,
And felt by many a Damascene.
Among this host there was a man,
Always the first in Calid's van,
Who, if the slaughter of the race
Of Christ could purchase Heaven's grace,
Would be the first to find a place
Among the amaranthine flowers
Of blest Al Janat's holy bowers[5].
Al Ashram's[6] love for Issa's[7] faith
Had stung him, and the wild thoughts scathe

His spirit still, his child and wife
Had perished in the unholy strife,
And he was through the wide world driven
Without a roof but that of heaven.
And thus to him the very name
Of Issa and his faith became
A cursed sound that told of hate,
Of blood and of his dear one's fate.
And now the trembling Christians feel
The vengeance of his jagged steel:
Onward he speeds, nor hears the cry
Of those who fight or those who die.
Midst many victims who imbrue
His sabre with death's sanguine dew,
Is one poor Christian who had long
Withstood the bloody Moslem throng.
And stemmed the battle's cruel tide,
Which onward streams in hellish pride.
And round him many corpses lay,
And many foes he kept at bay;

His faith in Christ, his ardent love,
(And that will nerve the trembling dove,)
For his poor infant and his wife
Then mann'd him for the bloody strife.
But dying shrieks too plainly tell
The progress of the infidel.
The Christian feels his wearied arm
Now falter, though his heart is warm;
His spirit, every eye can read,
Is dauntless though his feet recede.
But backward still the Moslem drives
His harassed foe; at length he rives
His courage from its last strong hold;
He breaks his sword with gore enrolled.
Before the Christian's eye appears
The object of his hopes and fears;
She bears her infant at her breast,
Who scarce is startled from his rest,
But, gazing round, his sparkling eye
Is pleased with battle's panoply;

He stretches forth his little hand
To catch the Moslem's bloody brand,
Then turns, and laughs with all the glee
Of unsuspecting infancy.
The Moslem sees the infant's play,
Then turns his haggard brow away,
The tear-drop sparkles in his eyes,
And all the vengeance in him dies,
" Ah! such a child was mine," he cries,
" But Christians sent him to the skies!"
He draws his hand across his brow,
While the dark streams of memory flow;
The warm rays of compassion melt
The icy sternness that had dwelt
Within his bosom, since the day
That snatched his wife and child away.
But while luxurious Pity flings
Her softness o'er his heart's worn strings,
And smoothens with her mild control
The furrows of his frowning soul,

His wrath awakes and casts aside
The fondling sense with burning pride,
As when the lips of Vesper stir
The tissue of the gossamer
With breath as gentle as the notes
In which love's mutual secret floats,
The rugged blast bursts from its lair
Of shaggy clouds, and grasps the air
In its fierce jaws, till Zephyr's voice
Is lost amid the stunning noise.
Now from his cheek the Moslem dashes
The tears that sparkle mid the gashes
By many a Christian sabre cleft,
And seem like dew the sun has left
On the scorched foliage of the oak,
Whose head has felt the lightning's stroke.
His passion sparkles in his eyes;
His frown is hell; he loudly cries,
" The mercy Christians showed to me,
That mercy will I show to thee.

They killed my wife before my eyes,
They racked me with my infant's cries,
Now feast thy Christian eye upon
The murder of thy infant son.
Now see thy consort's life-blood flow
Around my sword, thus shalt thou know
What anguish rankles in my heart
With burning, unrelenting, smart,
Whose heat no comfort can allay,
Whose scar no time can wipe away!"
He holds the child; the mother screams,
The husband's eye with phrensy gleams,
He grasps the sword, but feels his hand
Drop bloody from the hissing brand.
" Spare, spare my child!" the mother shrieks,
And anguish steeps each word she speaks,
" Oh spare my infant child and me,
And so shall mercy pardon thee!"
" How soundly Christian mercy slept!
No bosom sighed, no eyelid wept,"

The Moslem says, " when Christians slew
My wife and tender infant too.
No! die; and let thy murder tell
Proud Eblis in the gulf of hell,
How much I hate an infidel!"
He casts them down with hellish roar,
And gluts his sabre with their gore.
And thus the bloody Moslems pave
Their pathway with one sanguine grave.
But now the Damascenes oppose
The progress of their savage foes;
They call on Heaven to lend them aid,
And midst their broken prayers upbraid
Each other's terror, to excite
Their arms to stem the cruel fight.
They crowd around their battle-sign
Whose symbol is the cross divine[8];
The blue alcove of heaven is rent
With prayers and groans and curses blent;

The clash of swords, the horrid gush
Of hissing blood, the frequent crush
Of bones, and flesh, on which they tramp,
As wolves their bloody viands champ,
Torture the air, as when the wave
The wind and cloud together rave.
The foes recoil, but Caled leaps
Among the foremost ranks, and steeps
His sword in fresh-drawn blood, and wades
Far through the sea of crimson blades.
The locks of Mahomet are bound
Among the folds that twine around
His throbbing temples, which they shield
From all the dangers of the field[9].
" Will ye," he cries, " so basely fly
Before a Christian enemy?
Ye, who have seen before you fall
Tadmor and Bostra's haughty wall!
Come on, or Allah in his ire
Will plunge you in Jehennam's fire[10]."

Again the tecbir rings, again[11]
The sabres of the Moslems drain
The blood of many a Christian breast,
And send them to their pulseless rest.
In vain the Damascenes oppose
Their bosoms to the Moslem foes,
Their flaccid hearts again recoil
And faint amidst the bloody toil,
As when the wave of winter strains
  Its liquid nerves against a rock,
Its stony enemy remains
  Uninjured by the angry shock,
But the vain wave is backward thrown,
And far in sparkling fragments strown.
They fall! they fall! the fight is done;
The Moslems sack the captured town.
Now one among the turbaned band
Who scour the streets with fire and brand,
Reaches the room where Sela lay
Awaiting mildly life's decay.

She sighs, and scarcely seems to know
That Battle's orgies yell around;
And draws her hand across her brow
As if Death's wreath were on it bound;
Inquiring faintly with her eye
Who dared invade her privacy.
She starts; but now her pallid face
Is buried in his close embrace;
" Chozar!" she shrieks, and then again
Immerges deep her aching brain
In the full streams of joy that tear
The cursed flood-gates of despair.
Their spirits welter in delight;
Their life, their very pulse, is bliss!
All thought, all care, is stifled quite
In pleasure's rapturous abyss.
But when they waken from the swoon
Of joy, which ever flies too soon,
Their bosoms can no more contain
The fulness of their blissful boon,
But dew their cheeks with rapturous rain,

As bursting fruit, or clouds whose store
Of moist profusion trickles o'er.
But Sela severs with a scream
The rosy fetters of joy's dream;
She stares at Chozar while a thrill
Throbs through her frame as keen and chill,
As if a snake with hissing ire
Chained her in many a venomed gyre.
She shuddering turns aside her eye
With newly born antipathy,
As if a basilisk had met
Her sight, but not a murmur yet
Opes her white lips, but gurgling sighs
Faintly reveal her agonies.
Her lover, who had lately quaffed
Unsparingly joy's rapturous draught,
Now sees with stupified dismay
His promised pleasures stolen away.
His heart is palsied with surprise,
But soon poor Sela's maddened cries

" A renegade! a renegade!"
In horrid tones his ears infest,
And then Remorse's felon blade
Painfully goads his aching breast.
But passion, feelingly alive,
And injured love's resentment strive
Against Compunction's secret dart,
And pour their opiate o'er his heart.
" Oh cruel Sela, this from thee
For all affection's constancy?"
He cries, as soon as tears allow
His wild and phrensied words to flow,
" It was not thus that I repaid
Thy former love, ungrateful maid;
No: all that men most dearly prize,
Their richest boon beneath the skies,
For thee I sacrificed the whole,
My peace—my faith—my God—my soul!
No envious doubts, no terrors, strove
With my devoted, fatal, love;

My only terror was for thee;
My doubts for thy felicity.
My crime is that I love too well;
For thee I braved the pains of hell.
What if I cast away the creed
Of Jesus as a worthless weed,
What if I did abjure the name
Of Christian as a stain of shame?
It was not that I feared to die;
I only feared thy misery.
What if I challenged Heaven's ire
Which Christians arm with quenchless fire;
Denying him who died for me?
'Twas all for love! 'twas all for thee!
For thee, who now dost from me tear
That short reprieve from hell's despair,
Which love had promised as the price
Of endless, horrid, miseries.
Now all is pain—alone I stand,
The mark for every creature's hand,

An interdicted wretch whom none
In earth, or e'en in heaven, will own!
Pain frowns behind me, hell before
With burning misery evermore!
Oh! God, I have deserted thee;
And now thou hast deserted me!
Oh! Love, all this I dared for you,
But thou, alas! betray'st me too!
What do I with the Moslem-sign?
Since love is not, that is not mine.
I tear the turban from my brow,
And from my heart the Moslem-vow.
Oh! could I but as soon reclaim
A Christian's faith, a Christian's name!
That wish is vain; when I denied
My God, and him who for me died,
I knew that Jesus would deny
Me too, nor feared the penalty;
But oh I never, never, knew
That Sela could deny me too!"

" She does not, and she never can;"
Poor Sela cries, and meekly wan,
Her sweet cheek smiles amid its tears,
And her eye gleams as softly mild,
As when the rainbow-arch appears,
When fondling Zephyr has beguiled
The rugged Boreas of his shafts,
And the light clouds in silence wafts.
" Ah! no: though Heaven frowns upon
Chozar, his loved but erring son,
He still has suffered me to stay,
And wipe Contrition's tears away.
Dear Chozar, (for thou still art dear,)
We have not long to linger here;
Then since it was for Sela's sake
Thou didst abjure the Christian creed,
For Sela, her who loves you, make
Atonement for the fatal deed;
And then where neither sin nor pain
Can reach us, we shall meet again!"

" Sela, how can I bend the knee
Before that awful deity,
Whose holy creed I have denied,
Whose power and ire I have defied?
Sela, how can I ever dare
To offer up a holy prayer
To that pure ear, which heard me stake
My spirit for a mortal's sake?
Oh no, e'en Mercy would deny
Pardon to wretches such as I."
" No, Chozar, Heaven does not delight
In vengeance with a mortal's spite;
But when one of his sons may leave
His home for pleasures brief and vain,
He brings him back, and will receive
The truant in his fold again.
Mercy will hear the sinner's prayer,
When rigid Justice cries, " Despair!"
For Christ has thrown the altar down,
And left the mercy-seat alone!

Then let thy orisons arise,
Mercy will waft them to the skies;
And if my prayers can aught avail,
They too shall mingle in the gale,
And Heaven will hear, and when our woes
In this dark vale of sorrow close,
Our souls will meet where neither pain
Nor sin shall e'er intrude again!"
Thus from poor Sela's fading lips
The gentle dew of comfort drips,
Like the sweet drops the balsam's vein
Exudes upon an arid plain.
And how felt Chozar, as he cast
His eye upon the painful past?
The sweetness of those infant years
When smiles are true, and all our tears
Are but a mockery of the woe
Which childhood's hours can never know,
Now played around his heart again
Which late was made the abode of pain!

His faith deep-rooted in the soil
Of infancy, before the weeds
And tares of pleasure could despoil,
Or choke, the growth of virtue's seeds,
Again revived; for faith is fed
By sun-lit smiles from those we love;
The lips of those who now are dead
Perhaps the links more closely wove.
Perchance the hymn or holy prayer
Our heavenward lips from youth have breathed,
Is a sweet strain, a mother's care
Has round our infant memories wreathed.
And when our joys and dearest love,
The flowerets of the heart, have wove
Their tendrils round the olive spray
Of faith, and tightened as it grew,
Oh! who can tear that faith away,
Nor lacerate the heart-strings too?
Who has not felt at that sweet hour,
When Feeling wakes with all her power

As the soft moon-beams steep the sky
In all the light of melancholy,
The icy bands of worldly pride
Or gloomy hate, which closely tied
The spirit in the sunless cell,
Where apathy and sternness dwell,
Dissolve as snow which melts away
Before the sun's awaking ray?
'Tis thus the pure descending dews
Of holy faith their balm infuse
O'er hearts, where sin too long has wrought
The ravage of her deadly drought.
How sweet the tear that first descends
From the repentant sinner's eye,
Like the first drop of dew that bends
The flowerets of the tropic sky!
How sweet the first repentant prayer
Which casts the heavy load of care,
That long has galled the sinner's breast,
Before the throne of Heaven's rest!

And that sweet tear now dews the eye
Which wild despair had made so dry;
And prayer now issues from the tongue,
From which Despair had lately wrung
The cries with which her horrid fear
Insults sweet Mercy's sleepless ear.
Oh! Heaven never can despise
The holy, free-will sacrifice
Of a lorn heart, which sin and woe
Have wrenched from all but pain below!
Now Mercy drops the tender tear,
That ever sparkles in her eye
Ready to blot the words of fear,
Which shut the sinner from the sky.
Now Sela's feeble tones awake
The suppliant from his trance of prayer,
In which his heart had strove to slake
The thirstiness of long despair.
" Chozar, I hear the harps of heaven
Rejoicing that thou art forgiven!

My bliss is full—my task is done—
The wished for goal of heaven is won!
I leave you only to prepare
A place for you, that we may share
The pleasures of the world of bliss,
Since we have shared the woes of this.
Without a sigh I bid adieu
Unto the world and love and you,
To go where love will bloom again,
Free from the weeds of sin and pain.
I die content; if it is sweet
To hear the lips of friendship greet
Our steps, and sweeter the farewell
From lips and eyes we love so well;
How sweetly from such lips is given
The sigh that wafts us into heaven!
I go, I go, for angels call
My spirit to their heavenly hall;
But, Chozar, as I soar above,
My eye will turn to thee and love.

Although the bliss of heaven invite,
And spread its rapture to the sight,
Will the soul taste, nor turn below
To those who shared its joys and woe?
Never! we might as soon forget
The griefs with which our eyes are wet.
When from my heart thyself wert reft,
And not a trace of thee was left
But love, which burns when they who fed
The flame are far away or dead,
I fed the fire by day and night
With incense-dews of past delight.
The foliage of the tamarind tree
Turns to the sun as faithfully
When he has sunk beneath the sea,
As when most gloriously he shone;
And thus my memory turned to thee
As faithfully when thou wert gone.
To all my visions of delight
A greater brightness now is given;
And all the mist of sorrow's night

Has vanished in the dawn of Heaven!
Chozar, I fail, or I would tell
Much more, but oh I die; farewell!
Adieu! adieu! thou art forgiven,
And we shall meet again in heaven!"
She sinks, and now her 'Vale' takes
Of all that yet on earth was sweet,
As when a herald-angel shakes
The dust of earth from off his feet,
And rising like the evening wind
Leaves earth's pollution far behind.
As o'er the body Chozar stands
With glazing eye and death-cold hands,
As if his spirit too had flown
With hers for whom he lived alone,
Some warriors of the Moslem line,
Who chanced to ravage near, perceive
The insult of the Islam-sign,
And wreak their dire revenge, and weave
In the same wreath of death the flowers,
One band had held in sweeter hours.

Thus died this pair; and maidens tell
The tale of those who loved so well,
Whose hearts no sorrow could divide,
They lived in love, in love they died.
Their infant loves were born in calm,
But tempest caught them on their way:
Like blossoms of the virgin palm,
Which only usher in decay[12],
Their pleasures passed away in flower,
Mere pageants of a fruitless hour.
The soulless fool perchance may frown
On what his heart has never known,
But Pity's almoners will bring
Libations from their sacred spring,
To pour around the silent tomb,
Which tells the lovers' early doom.
For such alone this tale was wove,
Of Sela's faith, and Chozar's love.

FINIS.

NOTES

TO

THE SECOND CANTO.

[1] "Man has not where to lay his head."

"FOXES have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head."

[2] "To hide it from Love's eagle eye."

"Quis fallere possit amantem?"

VIRGIL, ÆN. lib. iv.

[3] "Adds to her own consuming smart."

"That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkind,
And nourisheth her own consuming smart."

SPENSER.

[4] "To bear the angel's claiming sign."

Vide REV. vii.

5 " Of blest Al Jannat's holy bowers."

Al Jannat, the Mahometan Paradise.

6, 7 " Al Ashram's love for Isa's faith!"

Al Ashram, one of the Ethiopian kings of Yaman. Isa, the Mahometan name of Christ.

8 The standard of the Damascences was a rich banner with the device of the cross.

9 When Mahomet cut off the forelocks of his camel at Mecca, they were caught by Caled, who interwove them with the folds of his turban; and was thought to be supported in battle by their virtue.

10 " Jehennam's fire."

Jehennam is the Mahometan hell.

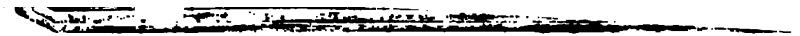
11 " Again the tecbir rings."

The tecbir was the Mahometan war-cry, " Allah acbar!"

12 " Like blossoms of the virgin palm
Which only usher in decay."

The peculiarities of the palm are too well known to require present notice.

MINOR POEMS.



MINOR POEMS.

SONNET.

THE sculptured stone may never bear my name,
To draw forth liquid sorrow from the eye
Of after time, and live embalmed by fame,
An endless life of grateful memory.
Ah! no: such hope in me were far too high;
For if the glow of genius ever came
Firing my soul with heavenly ecstasy,
It was unseen as the sepulchral flame,
That never flashed upon the face of day,
But 'midst devouring darkness passed away.
The few beloved, howe'er, who read my mind
To them unveiled, 'mid many faults could find
Something to love, and till their hearts decay,
My memory fresh will live in love enshrined!

TO A BUTTERFLY.

I WILL not end thy summer reign,
Thou little, trembling, painted, thing,
For Winter's storms too soon will stain
The beauties of thy gaudy wing.

No cloud o'ercasts thy glorious day,
Thou minion of the summer beam,
No cares hast thou to wile away;
No waking to thy joyous dream;

No tears, the price of laughing hours;
No wants to chill thy pleasures bland;
Thy banquet on the sweets of flowers
Is spread by Nature's generous hand.

Then wing thy airy flight again,
And hie thee to thy scented toys;
For I no longer will restrain
The freedom of thy playful joys.

And when marauding Winter's breath
Shall rifle all thy honied bowers,
Then sink into the sleep of death
With all thy sweet coeval flowers.

But man surviving, oft must gaze
Upon his ruined bowers forlorn,
And linger through his wintry days,
When all his summer joys are gone!

EVENING.

WELCOME! welcome! friendly gale,
Flowing o'er my throbbing brow;
Welcome! welcome! twilight pale,
Quenching day's obtrusive glow.

Welcome! welcome! tender hour,
When lone Sorrow breathes her sigh;
Watching life's frail, blighted, flower
Wither, till it cheerless die.

Faded! but when o'er it steals
Soothing Memory's moonlight ray,
Fresh again the stem reveals
Hope-buds for a brigher day.

Could such joy as that which lit
My happier hours beam again,
Eve's soft shades would sweetlier flit,
Daylight e'en be free from pain.

Ah! but that can never be!
Eve, then thou must share my tears,
Till Death's silent, waveless, sea,
Quench my spirit and its fears!

SONNET.

Oft in the silent, melancholy, hour,
In careless wreaths the flowers of song I wove;
And if the Muse assuaged Woe's poignant power,
Then not in vain to tune my harp I strove.
Still may she proffer, as I lonely rove
In woody glades, some sweet song-nurtured flower,
Some secret blossom of her holy grove,
Some garland of her own Parnassian bower!
I ask not wreaths, that may unfading bloom,
When I upon the grave's cold pillow lie,
Let not their freshness mock my crumbling tomb,
But let them with the hand that wove them die:
And let them be as wood-flowers, which none greets,
Save the lone bee that sips their secret sweets!

TO * * * *.

How oft to thee, when Sadness pours
Her secret tears, my fancy strays!
How oft to thee, in those still hours,
When no unkind, obtrusive, gaze
Can mock at lowering Melancholy,
Or sternness quench Affection's blaze,
Does Memory's constant, tear-dimmed, eye
Survey those happy vanished days,
Which sooth my sadness with a dream,
Flitting too soon with daylight's beam!

Though Disappointment's chilling cloud,
The eager quest of fame and lore,
May veil with momentary shroud
Those tracks of pleasure, now no more,

As pictures on the streamlet's breast
Vanish by tempests ruffled o'er,
But in the hour of Nature's rest
Are clear and vivid as before;
When mental tempests sleep, appears
Each trace still fresh still dewed with tears!

And ah! how sweet in life's hot war,
When cruel anguish rages round,
And storms are gathering from afar,
To hear still Memory's peaceful sound,
The verdure of the ivy bough
With which our crumbling hearts are bound;
How sweet, when Sorrow's wintry brow
On Pleasure's loveliness has frowned,
To visit still the withered flowers,
Which scented once her summer bowers!

TO CARA.

When thy eye, my dear Cara, shall dwell on the lay,
Which would oft as the sweet dew of Vesper distil,
When my cold heart lay withering in fortune's decay,
And would lull to repose, if not banish, each ill,

Let still Memory retrace the light footsteps of Youth,
Which all heedless she tracked on her pathway of joy;
When she thought that the world was a temple of truth,
And that love was a treasure, no rust could alloy.

When the tear that would trespass o'er Pleasure's bright eye,
Was a dew-drop whose fulness oppressed the young flower;
And each frown, like the vapour, Eve hangs o'er the sky
That its smile may be brighter in day's sunny hour.

When beguiled by the minstrel's sweet warbling we strayed
Through the serpentine vale or the canopied grove;
Or beneath the old abbey our footsteps delayed,
When reviewing the dark web by Destiny wove.

If the thought that these once beloved pleasures are gone,
Should intrude with its sadness, and wring the full tear;
Oh! reflect, my dear Cara, that night has its morn,
Though Joy's sun is now set, he will soon reappear.

In the full hive of memory then do not deplore,
Though the winter of sorrow around you may reign;
See the bee stays at home mid her far-gathered store,
When all flowerets are faded, till Spring come again!

YOUTH.

No woes can blend, some idly deem,
Their burning visions with Youth's dream;
But youthful breasts, which craving Woe
Has made her home, not always show
Their heart-wounds to the heedless world
Till manhood has their veil unfurled,
As in the bud no blights appear,
Although its inmost fold be sere.

WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

Come, come, my Muse, thou arrant jade,
And o'er my harp thy music pour;
Thine surely is a driving trade,
To rhyme away from hour to hour.

Although, as old Dan Cowley cries,
Thy labours and thy pains may be
As barren as a lover's sighs*;
Or as Theognis says, the sea;

I do not care: a Poet's fee
Should not be lucre; I despise
Such payment, and may mine e'er be
Sweet glances from the ladies' eyes.

* This is in allusion to that beautiful line of Cowley:
"And where such fairies dance no grass does ever grow."

Or any other, sweeter, premium,
That Love can give, or Love may ask:
But halt! my Muse, thou'rt all proemium;
Come, come, thou jade, commence thy task.

"My task!" she cries, "what, tasks again?
God bless me! you are as severe
As Egypt's tyrant, and my brain
Is dry, and Fancy's flowers are sere."

But come once more, and weave I pray
A little garland fresh and sweet,
For now it is my wish to lay
An offering at a lady's feet.

"Well! well!" she answers, "I will try—
If ladies ask it must be so—
To weave a wreath of melody:
Perhaps this little strain will do."

" Lady! when fleeting Pleasure plays
Around thee with her fairy form;
May she not be the phantom blaze,
That merely lights but does not warm!

Lady! when smiles shall gently seal
Their impress on thy cheek of snow,
May they be true, and not conceal
From worldly eyes a heart of woe!

Lady, when Softness from thy eye
Shall o'er thy cheek her tear-drops fling,
Oh! may they flow from sympathy
And not from Sorrow's bitter spring!"

FAREWELL.

THERE is a word that wakes the sigh,
There is a word that dews the eye,
There is a word that clouds the brow,
It is the word I utter now:

Farewell!

There is a word that says, 'We part,'
There is a word that wrings the heart,
It is a word so rife with pain,
I scarce can speak it o'er again.

Farewell!

Although this cruel word is born
Midst sighs and racking griefs forlorn;
No other word can ever tell
Affection's constancy so well.

Farewell!

There is a tear that does not flow
For any common, selfish, woe;
'Tis burnished by Affection's ray
To gleam upon the parting day.
Farewell!

The sun his brightest robe puts on
At evening, when his race is run;
Affection thus most bright appears,
Though bright before, through parting tears.
Farewell!

We could almost desire to part,
Although such parting wrings the heart,
To hear affection in the sigh,
To see it in the tearful eye.
Farewell!

Cara! my changing cheek now wears
A vesture of those parting tears;
Cara! my bosom heaves the sigh,
My prayer for thy felicity.
Farewell!

Past pleasure rises in my view,
And would delay the last adieu;
But come it must, though fraught with pain,
Cara, farewell! farewell again!

Farewell!

FRAGMENT OF 'TRUTH,'

AN UNFINISHED POEM.

* * *

COME then, my Muse, and o'er my withered brain
Sprinkle the fresh'ning dews of Castaly;
Recal to life the flowers that long have lain
Sere 'neath the yellow leaf of melancholy:
And, Pegasus, expand thy wings again
As eagles' pinions o'er the unwrinkled sky,
Do not, thou imp of Jove, degenerate to a mule,
As oft thou wast of late when rowel'd by a fool!

* * *

Woe hailed my young heart on this bleak world's verge
And claimed the infant scion as her own;
Her right she yields not: when you can absterge

The preying canker, that unseen has grown
With the young bud's developement, and purge
The deep disease which with life's seeds was sown,
Then you may sooth, then lull the heart to rest,
Which Sorrow nourished at her cruel breast!

Oh! this bleak world; man as the asp will fling
His poison in the wound when he has stung;
The blast relents not, though the parent wing
Should not o'ercanopy the callow young;
And from the heart which erst was withering
Woe recklessly the last hope-drop has wrung,
But bear we this; perhaps our neighbour dozes
Oft'ner on thorns than on Joy's bed of roses!

* * *

THE FOLLOWING LINES WERE WRITTEN IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUEST OF A LADY, 'TO COMPOSE A POEM ON A LITTLE FLOWER, THE ONLY MEMENTO OF A DEAR FRIEND.'

How oft as through life's gloomy valley we stray,
When sorrow and languor encircle our way;
A sight, or a sound, will recal to the mind
The friends and the joys we are leaving behind!

And trifling mementos thus often appear
To Friendship's wet eye far more precious and dear,
Than jewels the brightest that glow 'neath the skies,
Or treasure, the worldling most highly may prize.

And thou, little flower, may perhaps be as dear
To her who has placed thee, thou fragile one, here;
Though faded, thy ruin may tell of the bloom
Of love, which survives e'en the blight of the tomb.

Thyself art a memory of Summer's bright day,
And sweets which stern Winter has rifled away;
Then be a memento of love's summer too,
For that was still sweeter and swiftlier, flew!

ADDRESS,

FOR THE ANNIVERSARY 1827 OF THE CANTERBURY PHILOSOPHICAL AND LITERARY INSTITUTION, READ BEFORE THE LECTURE.

TIME's annual tide has ebbed: and now again
We meet to celebrate the festive day,
Which found us pilgrims to Truth's holy fane,
Our thirst of knowledge in her fount to allay;
Stern Time may leave his footsteps of decay
On Durovernum's walls, the storm may rage,
Oblivion veil, they ne'er shall wipe away
That glorious record from her history's page,
That oasis of splendour in her waste of age!

For now where erst the thirsty bigot drank*
His vampire-draughts of human martyr-blood,
Upon the soil whose very grass grew rank
With saturation of the sanguine flood,

* Canterbury has been disgraced by bloody persecutions.

Where Folly's mildew blighted in the bud
Each generous thought, is lit the hallowed flame
Of Truth's bright schechinar, and manna food
Of knowledge now is spread for those who claim
The birthright of mankind, intelligence and fame!

Here may we view the piles of ancient ground*,
The tower and pyramid, supremely grand
In their mute hoariness, and not a sound
Thrills on the ear, though by the brink we stand
Of time's wide flood, as on the tramm'ling strand
The shipwrecked mariner who pours his sighs
With eager yearnings for his native land,
And not a whisper to his voice replies:
Ye stand, ye silent towers, while ruin round you flies!

How are the trophies of Time's wasteful might†—
That cannibal of life—sepulchral stones
Of breathing worlds long plunged in watery night;
Oh! were a voice in these Jew relic bones

* The models and antiquities.
† The fossils.

To tell their records with revealing moans,
And o'er our thirsty ears their secrets pour!
But nought is heard save these prophetic tones,
" Ye gazing, heedless, gay will be no more
In a few years than we, and swell earth's charnel store!"

And here are seen the songsters of the grove,
Sweet caterers of woodland melody;
And the light, living, things whose wings were wove
In Nature's loom, and tinged with rainbow die,
Those glittering baubles of the summer sky,
Those gems of air; and here the gaudy toys,
The playthings of wide ocean's gaiety;
Some traits of Nature's beauty, which decoys
With never sating sweets from painted Art who cloys.

And ancient Egypt's and Chaldea's arts
May soothe the cravings of some mind's desire;
Some cast at will the lightning's flame-winged darts,
The weapons of the skies convulsed with ire:

Some heavenward eyes perchance from earth aspire
To mark the beauties of the etherial meads,
The beaming star, the reinless comet's fire,
And the calm, breathing worlds which Beauty leads;
On such delights as these the mind of science feeds!

Some searching into Nature's mysteries
With Egypt's Hermes, may have oped the doors
Of earth's deep vaults, and to admiring eyes
Disclosed the wonders of her hidden stores*;
Or told how glorious Sol profusely pours
His liberal streams of fresh'ning light and life,
How fixed the base of Earth's primeval towers,
How from her heaving breast with struggles rife,
Have risen infant hills the offspring of the strife†.

Nor while we quench our thirst in Science' streams,
Do we despise the Muse's flowers that bloom
Upon their banks, and proffer Beauty's beams
To cheer the dulness of their ambient gloom;

* Chemistry and Mineralogy.
† Geology.

Long may their genial smile our souls illume!
Let the cold misanthrope all feeling wring
From his dull breast, and every thought entomb
In apathy, but let the Muses fling
Their joy-beams o'er our hearts, and wake each yielding string.

These are man's rights, and ne'er shall more be riven:
This day is due to glad festivity,
But ere to smile-lit mirth free scope is given
We'll hear revealed old Hermes' mystery*;
Then let joy reign, o'er sons of memory
Cast reminiscent wreaths, for they withdrew
The film of folly from the mental eye,
And taught it with an eagle ken to view
Bright Knowledge' wide spread realms, a world of beauties new!

Long have we broken Superstition's chain;
With constant step ascended Learning's hill;

* There was a Lecture on Chemistry delivered on the occasion.

High have we reached, but higher steeps remain
To tempt our ceaseless aspiration still.
Then onward to the spring from which distil
The streams of science, that our eyes may gaze
Upon their Naiad, Truth, with rapturous fill,
For lo! to her all nations pæans raise,
And from a world, her altar, gleams the votive blaze!

SONNET.

My sullen harp! no longer from thee springs
The stream of song to quicken life's frail flowers,
The faded few which deck her ruined bowers,
But desert silence isolates thy strings.
Save when the thirsty gale around thee flings
Its sighs lamenting for those faded hours
When oft it bore away its tuneful showers
Of liquid harmony on joyous wings.
Thou now art like the sea-shell, which the tide
Has left, and all its living tones subside
To a still echo; but o'er that the sea
Again its thrilling waves will freshly roll;
And so from thee may dews of melody
Again distil, to feast my famished soul!

FINIS.

C. Whittingham, Tooks Court, Chancery Lane.

BOOKS

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